sions, or signed preliminary agreements for them, for roads from Shanghai to Nanking and from Shanghai to Hangchow. In 1898 and 1899 agreements were also made with an Anglo-Italian company for mines and railways in Shansi and Honan, with the Russo-Chinese Bank—and later transferred to a French syndicate—for a railway to connect the capital of Shansi with the Peking-Hankow line, and with a Franco-Belgian syndicate for a road paralleling the Yellow River. Great Britain attempted to keep the Yangtze Valley clear for her own railway projects by an agreement with Germany (1898) for reciprocal respect for each other's spheres, and with Russia (1899), whereby Great Britain was not to encroach with railways north of the Great Wall or Russia in the Yangtze Valley.

There were also grants of concessions similar to those that Great Britain had enjoyed in several of the ports. Most of those made at this time were in Hankow, which appeared about to become a great railway center.

The British attempted to assure the continuation of their predominance in the administration of the customs by a promise from Peking (1898) that so long as their trade remained greater than that of any other nation, the Inspector General should be of British nationality. The French endeavored, with scant success, to obtain the confirmation of a similar control over the postal service.

AMERICA AND THE OPEN DOOR POLICY

In 1898 and 1899, then, the scramble for portions of what seemed to be a disintegrating empire was both active and sordid. The Chinese Government, unable to defend itself by force, found its chief recourse in delay. Occasionally it scored a victory—as

when, in 1899, it declined outright to give Italy a naval station on the coast of Chekiang. Too often, however, it was helpless.

Russia appeared to be about to seize full control of Manchuria and Mongolia, Germany that of Shantung, France that of much of the South and Southwest, and, possibly, Great Britain that of the Yangtze Valley.

Within the next few years, three major efforts were made to save the Empire from its impending doom. One of these was by foreigners, the other two by Chinese.